



Grief Exercises: What to Say and What Not to Say

What Not to Say	What to Say!
<p>Reactionary Phrases from <i>our</i> Anxiety: Look on the bright side, cheer up, you'll get over this, time heals all wounds, they're better off and so are you, their body was just a vehicle.</p>	<p>Acknowledge and validate their feelings. Take the time to express condolences, recognizing what they have been going through and acknowledge the loss.</p>
<p>Over-Exaggerating Sympathy: This is so awful, I cannot even imagine what you are going through. You must feel so alone! I don't even know how you're still standing here. This is the worst of its kind!</p>	<p>Align with understanding: Will you share with me what this has been like for you? This is one of the most difficult times of your life. Will you share this with me?</p>
<p>Time and our Expectations: You should be past this by now. Don't you think you should be further along by now? You're the man/lead of this house/family now.</p>	<p>Empathize and Lend a Hand: People experience many different types of emotions. What are you experiencing right now? How can I help you during this difficult time? Let's think of ways to honor memories.</p> <p>When receiving and responding to, "I'm sorry for your loss" simply reply, "Thank You."</p>
	<p>Keep in Mind: According to Post, 2015, those grieving will only immediately absorb 5-10% of what you say. Give information in writing, listen more than speaking, show emotions, but <i>do not make the griever take care of you!</i> If possible, grievers should avoid major changes within the first 12 months (career change, moving, changing jobs, etc.)</p>



Normal Grief Reactions - Kids and Teens

Age 0-2

- Do not understand the finality of death
- Increased irritability and crying
- Change eating and sleeping patterns
- Can become detached

Age 2-5 years Old

- Do not understand the finality of death and may ask questions repeatedly
- Confused and believe death is reversible
- Lack words to express grief
- Act out feelings in behavior and play
- Experience separation anxiety even after
- Experience nightmares
- Display Regressive behaviors (toilet training, thumb sucking, bed wetting)

Ages 6-9 Years Old

- Begin to understand finality of death
- Believe death only happens to others
- Personify death as ghosts or monsters
- Engage in magical thinking, and may feel they caused death
- Have strong feelings of grief and loss, expressed more through anger
- Lack words to express grief
- Often need permission to grieve, especially boys

Ages 9-12 Years Old

- Understanding finality of death
- Experience difficulty concentrating
- Have curiosity about the physical aspects of death
- May identify with deceased by imitating mannerisms
- Have vocabulary to express grief, but often choose not to
- Need encouragement to express feelings and grieve

Ages 13-23 Years Old (Adolescents)

- Have an adult understanding of death
- Philosophize about life and death and search for meaning of death and life
- Can express grief, but often choose not to
- Affects entire life - school, home, relationships
- May appear to coping well when they are not
- Are often thrust into role of comforter
- Participate in dangerous behavior like drugs and alcohol or reckless driving